

Loyal Heights Lighting Renovation Meeting Summary 1-11-06

Less than 10 community members attended a community meeting to review and comment on lighting improvements at Loyal Heights Playfield. Invitations to the community meeting were mailed to over 5000 nearby residents and other interested parties.

Parks Department staff Cathy Tuttle, Planner, Dennis Cook, Senior Recreation Coordinator, and consultant Don McLean, Principal of DMD & Associates, an engineering firm specializing sports lighting and obtrusive lighting issues attended the meeting and were available to listen to ideas and answer community comments.

Project budget, scope, and schedule

Planner Cathy Tuttle described the project's budget, schedule, and scope. The budget for upgraded field lighting is about \$450,000. This money was reprioritized from other athletic fields that also need lighting improvements so that lighting could be added as requested by the Loyal Heights community. The goal is to provide upgraded lighting by the fall of 2006. The higher light poles require a City Council Hearing. The timing of this Hearing and its outcome will determine the final schedule of new lighting installation.

This project will replace the existing field lighting for Loyal Heights Playfield's soccer and softball fields to provide more uniform surface illumination with minimum energy consumption and add lighting for the existing baseball field, while restricting spill and glare lighting from falling on nearby residences, per City code and Department standards.

The Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.3 million for the Loyal Heights Playfield Improvement project. This project will upgrade athletic field lighting and rebuild and resurface the existing two ballfields and football/soccer field with synthetic turf for year-round, all-weather use, improved quality of play that requires minimal annual field maintenance. Construction of the project will be completed in 2006.

Description of lighting system

Lighting engineer Don McLean described the upgraded Loyal Heights lights. Because the new fixtures will replace fixtures more than 30 years old, glare will be significantly reduced. Don presented a graphic with light meter readings from sidewalks around the field and said new lighting would easily meet the City's required 1.1 footcandles or less of light spill.

The old wooden light poles will be replaced by steel poles. Steel poles do not bend and warp out of alignment as the old poles did, causing uneven light spillage. Further improvements in light shielding will eliminate most spill and sky glow from this athletic field lighting system. Don explained that taller poles typically reduce the impacts off site because the fixtures can be aimed more accurately downward on the field. Don also said a synthetic field was less reflective and caused less sky glow and spill light effects.

The scope of this project is to provide new field lighting that:

1. Eliminates objectionable spill and glare lighting on surrounding residences,
2. Improves lighting uniformity for player safety,
3. Improves lighting efficiency and power conservation,
4. Improves program control for selective field lighting, and
5. Reduces light levels to Park standard for Class IV Recreational fields.

Community questions and comments

Can Parks guarantee field lights will be shut off after 10 p.m.? Five security lights will be mounted on the metal light poles and turned on when the field lights are shut off at 10 p.m. so that players can safely exit

the field. The security lights produce light comparable to a street light. The security lights will remain on less than 30 minutes and then turn off. The athletic field lights will automatically shut off at 10 p.m.

How bright will the field lights be? The lighting standard for Seattle playfields is 30 lux in the infield and 20 lux in the outfield. This standard is actually below the Little League Standard of 50/30 lux, but Parks would like to maintain a lower light level within City parks to be a good neighbor. Neighbors will notice an immediate improvement with the new field lights.

What will happen to the floodlights on the back side of the Community Center? These floodlights were requested by the community to reduce vandalism and undesirable behavior in the back of the community center. These floodlights, or a similar set of lights will be retained.

How are lights maintained and adjusted after they are installed? There is a “burn-in” period while light levels naturally adjust. A few weeks after the lights are installed, Parks will put signs around the field asking neighbors to contact Parks with specific light adjustment needs. After this adjustment and reaiming period, lights will be checked and realigned if necessary. The fixtures will be maintained regularly by Parks electricians and lighting manufacturers.

Can both Field #1 and Field #2 be used at the same time? No. Only Field #2 and the soccer/football field are lit now. Parks wants to make the playfield flexible for all activities. Field #1 is used by Pony League baseball, Field #2 is used by Little League and softball. The lighting system will be designed so that only one baseball or softball field can be lit at any one time. If a user accidentally tries to light Field #1 and Field #2 at the same time, the electrical system will shut down.

What local projects have similar lights? Lower Woodland field #1 is nearby and has similar lights. You can contact Dennis Cook at 684-7094 to ask to have the lights turned on for your review.

Can Parks provide electrical outlets in the field to plug in pitching machines? Parks will put a locked electrical outlet that the community will be able to open when needed.

For more information, please call Parks Project Planner Cathy Tuttle at 206-684-1336 or e-mail at cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov.